

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the Abstract originally appearing on page 16 of the application as follows:

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A two-step via cleaning process ~~which that~~ removes metal polymer and oxide polymer residues from a via with substantially no damage to the via or underlying structures on a semiconductor substrate. The via is formed through a dielectric layer and a barrier layer ~~which that~~ are disposed over a metal-containing trace, pad, or other such circuitry, wherein the metal-containing trace, pad, or other circuitry is disposed on a semiconductor substrate. When such a via is formed, the sidewalls of the via are coated with a residue layer. The residue layer generally has a distinct oxide polymer component and a distinct metal polymer component. The two-step cleaning process comprises first subjecting the residue layer to a nitric acid dip ~~which that~~ removes the metal polymer component to expose the oxide polymer component. The oxide polymer component is then subjected to a phosphoric acid dip ~~which that~~ removes the oxide polymer component. The oxide polymer and metal polymer residues may also be removed during the fabrication of the via by removing them directly after their respective formations.